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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 14th February, 2024

Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor T Cowdrey (Chair)
Councillors N Folkard (Vice-Chair), B Beggs, S Buckley, C Campbell,
P Collins, A Dear, J Harland, D Jones, A Line, C Nevin, M O'Connor,
D Richardson, O Richards and A Quinn

(*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 30.)

In Attendance: Councillors H Boyd, J Moyies and C Mulroney
M Harvey, M Marks, L Minnis and S Cox

Start/End Time: 6.30 - 8.35 pm

45 **Chair's Introduction & Apologies for Absence**

(a) Chair's Introduction

Prior to the consideration of the matters set out in the agenda, the Chair outlined their expectations of the standard of conduct and behaviour to be shown at the meeting.

(b) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G Leroy, Councillor K Murphy and Councillor N Ward (Substitute: Councillor S Wakefield).

Apologies were also received from Rev L Williams (Church of England Co-opted Member) and T Watts (Southend Carers, Co-opted Member).

(c) Adjournment of Meeting

The Chair proposed that the meeting be adjourned to a later date to consider items 12, 13 and 14 (Dementia Community Support Service, Telecare Charging and the Future of Family Centres) due to the reports being published late.

Prior to the meeting the reports to items 12,13 and 14 were circulated to the Committee and published online. A calendar invitation to hold Tuesday 27th February 2024 to consider these items of business was circulated.

As the date was after the required publication date of the Cabinet agenda, it was suggested that the reports that were already circulated for People Scrutiny be published in the Cabinet agenda, however any comments and feedback from Scrutiny be added as an addendum so that Scrutiny's views could be considered.

Councillor T Cowdrey (Chair) proposed to adjourn the meeting for the aforementioned items of business, which was seconded by Councillor N Folkard and unanimously agreed.

(d) Southend Hospital Neonatal Unit

The Chair advised that Democratic Services had circulated an update in relation to children's services and changes to the level 2 Neonatal Care at Southend Hospital.

The Chair encouraged the Committee to review these changes and feedback any comments and advised that an invitation had been extended by the trust to the Committee to visit the Southend Paediatric ward and NICU.

46 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

- (a) Councillor B Beggs – (Minute 51) – independent panel member of the fostering panel.
- (b) Councillor T Cowdrey – (Minute 51) – panel member of the fostering panel.
- (c) Councillor J Harland – (Minute 51) – panel member of Adoption Panel, (Minute 50) – son is employed at Southend Hospital.
- (d) Councillor N Folkard – (all items) – relative works for Broomfield Hospital and part of the fundraising team for Southend Hospital.
- (e) Councillor C Nevin (all items) – previous association at Southend and Broomfield hospitals; family members employed at Mid and South Essex Trust and is an NHS employee within an external trust.
- (f) Councillor M O'Connor – (Minute 53) – employed at South Essex Advocacy service.
- (g) O Richards, Co-opted Member – (Minute 53) – report references Healthwatch.

47 Questions from Members of the Public

The Committee noted the response of the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Adult Social Care and Constitutional Affairs to a question presented by Mr Webb.

The Committee noted the response of the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Adult Social Care and Constitutional Affairs to a question presented by Ms Denham.

The Committee noted the response of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education & Learning to a question submitted by Ms Stone, which would be sent to Ms Stone as she was not present at the meeting.

48 Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 December 2024

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 December 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

49 Severe and Multiple Disadvantage Service (SDMS) Contract

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) by way of pre-Cabinet Scrutiny, which presented an extension to the Severe and Multiple Disadvantage Service (SMDS) contract to 31 March 2025.

Resolved:

That the report to Cabinet be noted.

50 East of England Ambulance Service - Overview and Performance

The Committee received a report from the East of England Ambulance Service which provided an update in relation to the performance of the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) in Southend-on-Sea.

Members of the Committee asked a number of questions, specifically relating to:

- The response times for patients outside of the most serious and urgent category (known as C1) as it was felt the figures focussed on the most urgent cases.
- The number of community responders in operation across the city, as some Councillors reported examples of residents waiting for long periods of time.
- Further detail on the modelling activity of Shoeburyness Ambulance Station.
- Further information beyond 2025.
- Deeper analysis of category 2 calls and the ambulance trust plans to hit 30-minute timeframe.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

51 Update on Children's Services Improvement Programme

The Committee received the report of the Independent Improvement Advisor for Children's Services which provided an update regarding the progress and key developments over the last 12 months in supporting children's services to enable vulnerable children and young people to achieve consistently good outcomes.

The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by the Independent Improvement Advisor, in relation to:

- The specificity and timeliness of plans.
- Children's services approach to the neglect review.
- The importance of smart, specific plans co-produced by families.
- Finding long-term stable homes.

Resolved:

That the People Scrutiny Committee:

1. Note the progress made by the leadership team, managers and practitioners in children's services in improving the quality of services to children, young people and their families over the last 18 months.
2. Note the priority areas for continued service development for 2024.

52 Update on the implementation of the Southend SEND Area Partnership

The Committee received a presentation on the Southend SEND Area Partnership which provided an update since the last inspection and key actions.

Members of the Committee asked a number of questions in relation to:

- Recommendation 4 and the Joint Dashboard
- Reference to the Task and Finish group – neurodiversity and the next steps with demand and capacity review.
- Challenges about the lack of ADHD medication.
- The relational practice training offer and take up with schools.
- Autism diagnosis and the process for when parents pay for this privately.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

53 Information, Advice and Guidance

The Committee received a presentation from the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) on information, advice and guidance and the accessibility of services.

There was a brief discussion on the stop smoking service and NHS checks, and concerns about vaping, especially in a younger demographic.

A Councillor highlighted the importance of ensuring services addressed neurodiversity concerns in relation to hold music played on telephony systems.

Officers provided an update in relation to the digital information, advice and guidance service, the restructure of 'MySouthend' and the work that was underway in the new 'front-door' service.

Resolved:

That the contents of the presentation be noted.

54 Outside Bodies Task and Finish Group - Final Report and Recommendations

Councillor C Mulroney, Chair of the Outside Bodies Task and Finish Group, presented the final report and recommendations.

The Place, People and Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committees agreed to establish the Outside Bodies Task and Finish Group at the meetings held in July 2023.

Councillor C Mulroney was commended for leading on this work. As Chair of the Outside Bodies Task and Finish Group, Councillor Mulroney felt that Task and Finish groups were a good way of scrutiny undertaken short and effective pieces of work, rather than adopting a one in-depth scrutiny project approach.

Members felt that it was essential to have agreed mechanisms for reporting back and holding appointed Councillor representatives to account.

Members of the Committee raised questions regarding a few of the outside bodies, and further explanation was provided on whether they were in existence – as a number had ceased to exist.

Members agreed that it would be beneficial to separate the Cabinet Member appointments from the main appointee list for ease at Appointments Council.

Resolved:

That the report and recommendations arising from the Outside Bodies Task and Finish Group, as detailed in Section 6 of the attached report, be agreed.

Note: This is a scrutiny function Cabinet Member: Councillor J Moyies (Cabinet Member for Public Health, Adult Social Care & Constitutional Affairs).

55 Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements - Terms of Reference

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director (Strategy and Change) which set out the framework for the working relationship between the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee that was proposed to be established by Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council (JHOSC) and the health scrutiny committees at each of those three local authorities (the local HOSCs) or a combination of these.

Resolved:

That the Terms of Reference of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee be endorsed.

Councillor T Cowdrey (Chair) adjourned the meeting for the remaining items of business (agenda items 12,13 and 14) until 27 February 2024, which was seconded by Councillor N Folkard and unanimously agreed.

56 Dementia Community Support Service

57 Tele Care Charging

58 Future of Family Centres - Outcome of Consultation and Recommendations

Chair: _____

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